



Crime Lab News

Volume 1, Issue 1

Spring 2017

Upcoming Training Opportunity

CODIS
Collection Training
When: May 23, 2017
10:30 am – 12:00 pm

This is open for any agency that collects the CODIS Database samples. The training will cover instructions on the CODIS kit collection process as well as information on our new Remote Collection website. This new process allows collection sites to verify if a sample is needed from an individual and help reduce duplicate and non-qualifying submissions.

If you are interested in attending, please contact the CODIS section at: 501-227-5747

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Laboratory News

Welcome to the first edition of the Crime Lab News. The purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to keep our partners in law enforcement and the judicial system informed of the latest news and updates within the Arkansas State Crime Lab. Our intent is to establish clear communication regarding our backlog, turn around times, drug trends, staffing updates, and other pertinent news.

A Message from our Director



The Arkansas State Crime Laboratory is dedicated to providing up-to-date, quality forensic science services to our criminal justice customers.

The laboratory takes pride in having state of the art technology; however the best asset is our highly trained and dedicated staff. We encourage you to communicate with our staff to have conversations about your case, the type of analyses you are requesting, or simply having a pre-trial meeting. This is by far the most valuable tool available.

Reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns about your case.

I hope you find our newsletter informative.

Case Management Guidelines and Evidence Collection Tips

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when requesting distance determination analysis from the Firearm and Toolmark section of the laboratory:

1. Distance determination testing will only be conducted if the firearm is submitted.
2. Submitting the appropriate ammunition is preferred.
3. Distance testing will not routinely be conducted if there is a video of the shooting incident.
4. Distance determination testing will typically only be performed on clothing, with the exception of shot patterns.



Section Focus—Firearm and Toolmark

The Arkansas State Crime Laboratory's Firearm and Toolmark section utilizes the National Integrated Ballistics Information System (NIBIN) as a tool for identifying links between cases submitted to the lab. NIBIN is a computerized system that images areas of fired cartridge cases using optical and electronic technology. These images are searched against a database and the results are reviewed by a Firearm examiner or trained technician in order to identify possible associations between cases. A "NIBIN Lead" is the result of an association being found during that review. After a NIBIN Lead is found, a NIBIN Hit Letter will be issued to the investigator(s) for the cases via iResults. This letter provides information related to each case involved in the NIBIN Lead as well as instructions on what evidence needs to be resubmitted if this NIBIN Lead needs to be confirmed.

If a report of analysis is required (particularly for court proceedings), a NIBIN Lead needs to be confirmed through microscopic testing by an examiner at the laboratory. Please notify us of your desire to have a NIBIN Lead confirmed within 30 days of the issue of the NIBIN Hit Letter, as any retained evidence will be returned after that time. NIBIN

Leads will only be confirmed if the appropriate evidence is resubmitted or if you notify us via phone or email. A report will be

issued documenting the results of this microscopic examination.

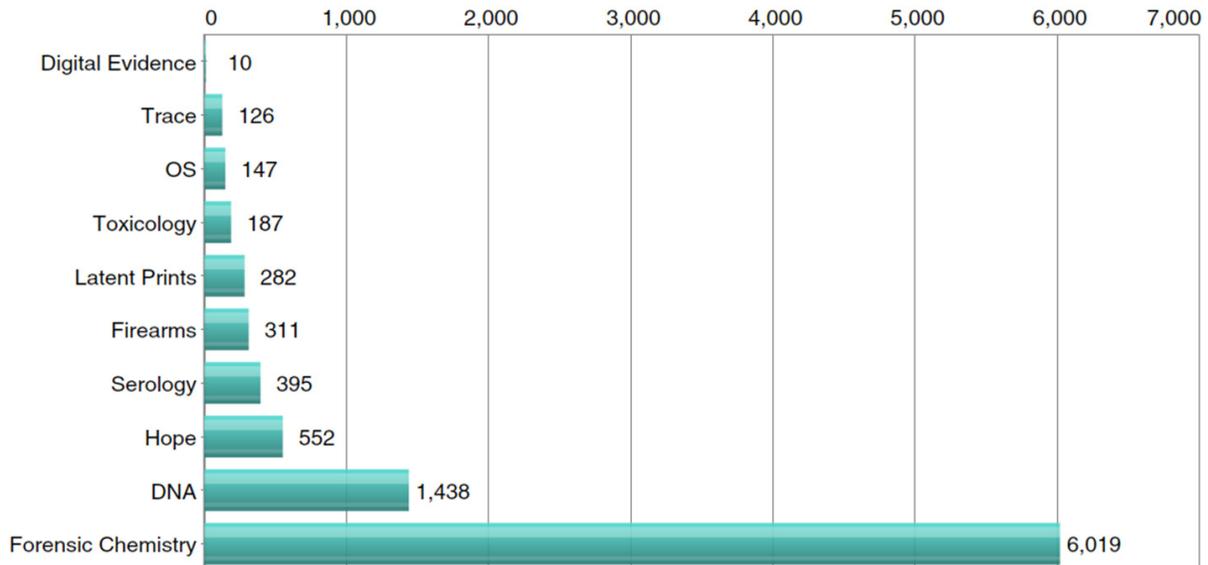


AS OF APRIL 2017, THE FIREARMS SECTION HAS HAD OVER 200 CONFIRMED NIBIN HITS.

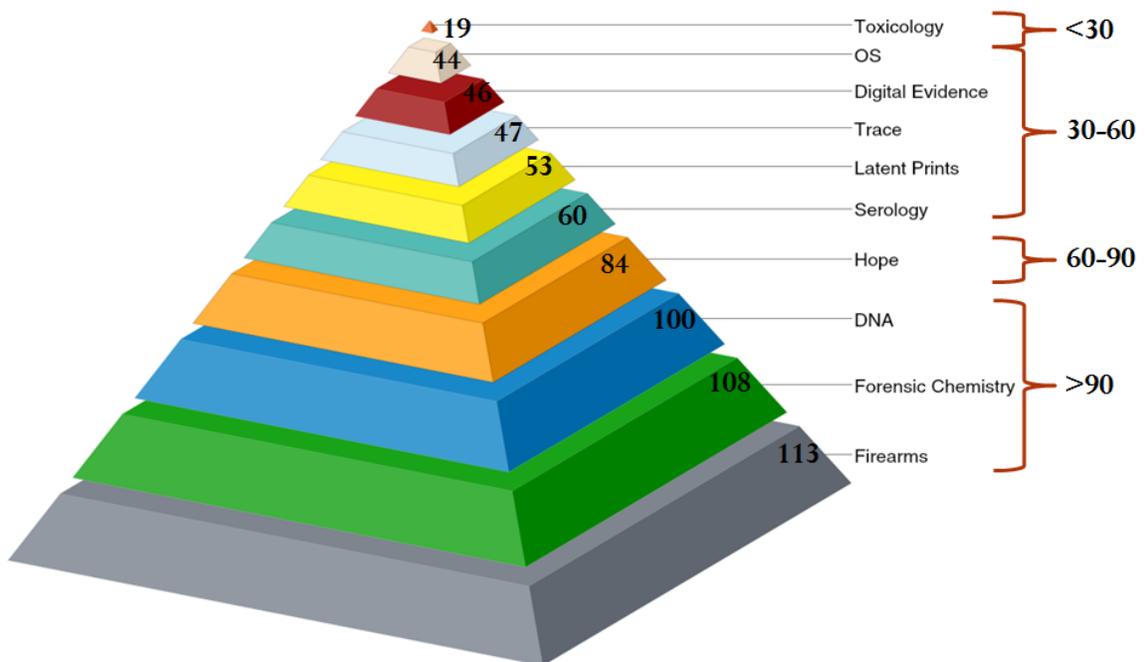
Current Backlog and Turn-Around-Times

Below are the current backlogs and turn-around-times for each discipline. A major difficulty, as is true with many forensic laboratories, is the retention of analysts. Training of new analysts can take anywhere from three months up to two years, depending on the discipline.

BACKLOG



OVERALL - TURNAROUND TIMES



Staffing Updates

Since the beginning of 2017, the Crime Lab has welcomed seven new employees:

- Kim Throgmorton, Subpoena Coordinator (Drug Chemistry)
- Jazmin Martin, Drug Chemist
- Leslie Barker, Latent Print Examiner
- KaRyn Terry, Serologist, Physical Evidence
- Kris Dudoich, Medical Transcriptionist
- Joy Green, Secretary, Medical Examiner’s Office
- Tom McGuire, Field Investigator, Medical Examiner’s Office
- Michael Wilson, Latent Print Examiner

As the year progresses, we are continually hiring to ensure all of our sections are fully staffed and operational. In addition to the above named new employees, we currently have six DNA analysts who are in training. We are also in the process of hiring additional DNA and Physical Evidence–Serology analysts.

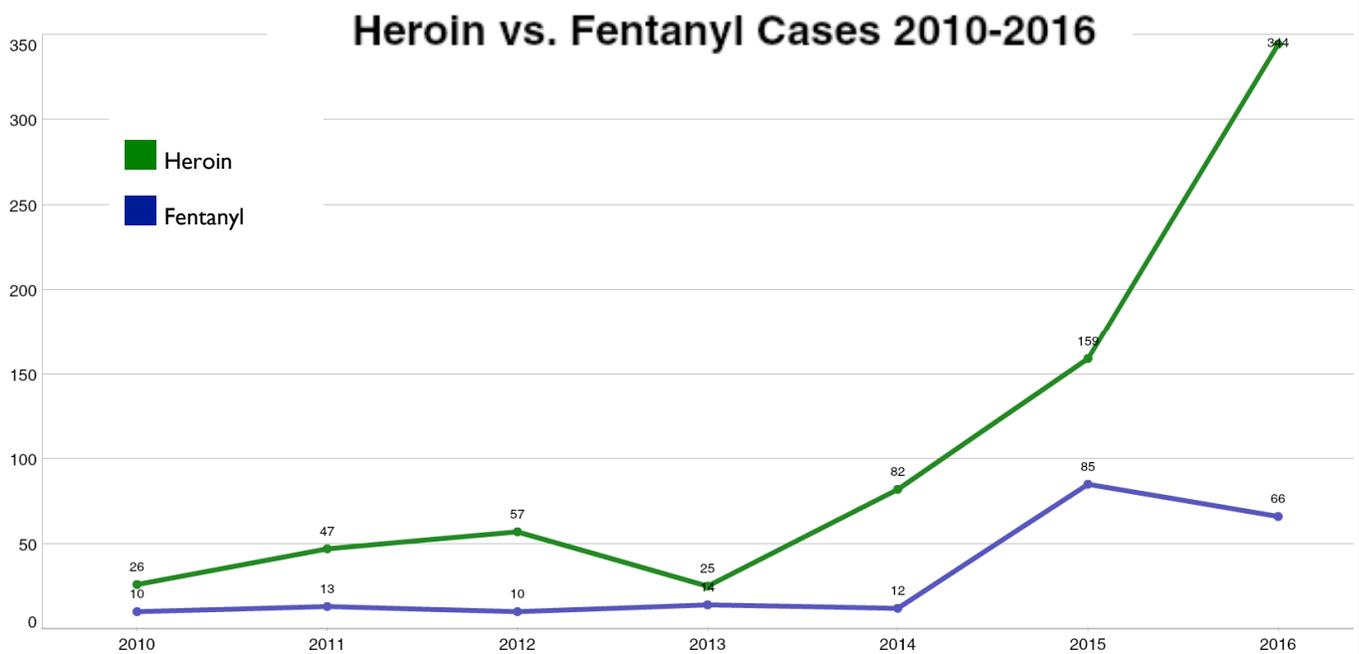
**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR PATIENCE**

We appreciate your patience during this time as we are working hard to keep our sections fully staffed and operational. As these new employees come off training in the upcoming months, we hope that you will start to see an improvement in our backlog and turn around times.

Drug Trends

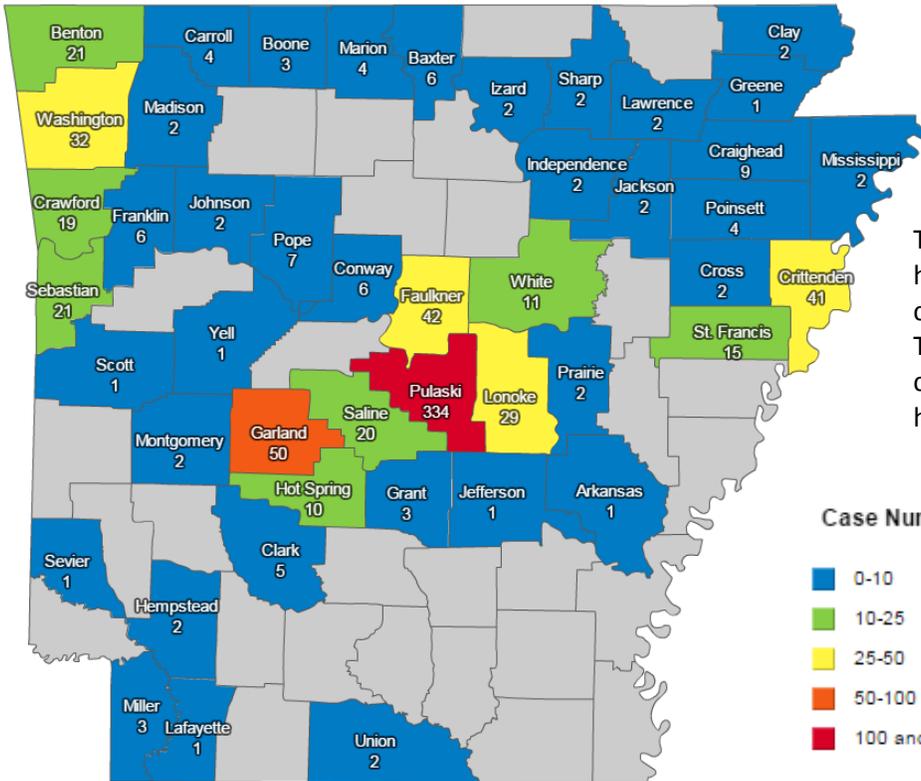
The Forensic Chemistry Section had a dramatic increase in case submissions in 2016. That trend has carried over into 2017.

There has also been an increase in cases containing heroin and fentanyl. The below line graph shows the cases containing heroin and fentanyl by year from 2010 – 2016.



Drug Trends— Fentanyl and Heroin

Heroin Cases 2010-2016

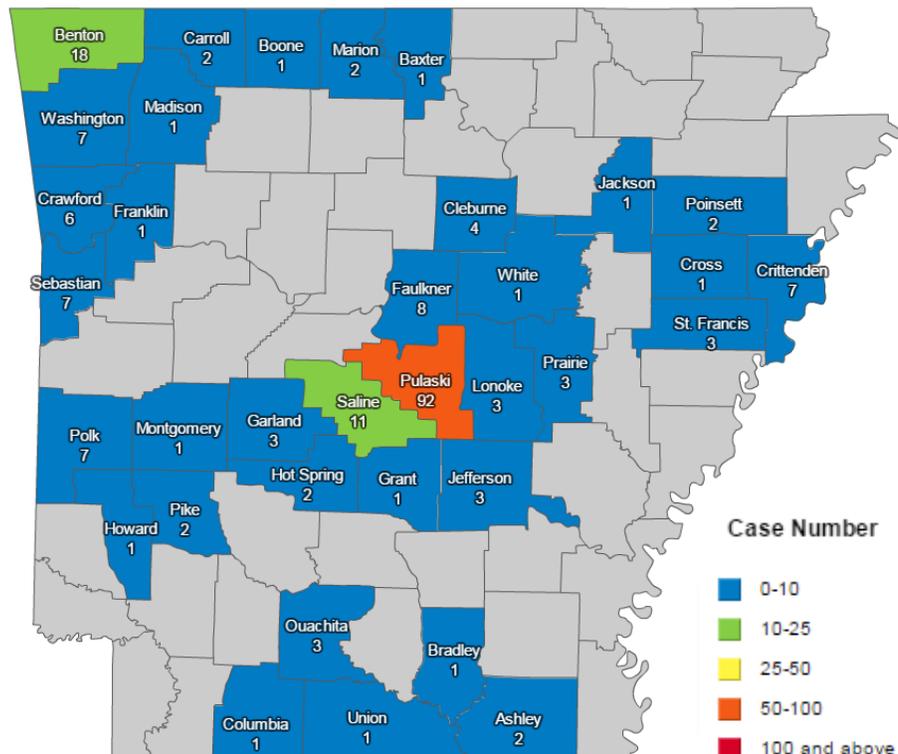


The Forensic Chemistry Section has seen an increase in cases containing heroin and fentanyl. These maps show the number of cases containing fentanyl and heroin for the years 2010 – 2016.

Case Number



Fentanyl Cases 2010-2016



Case Number



These fentanyl cases include:

- Fentanyl analogues
- Acetylfentanyl
- Acrylfentanyl
- Butyrylfentanyl
- Furanylfentanyl

In addition to the increase of these opioids, the laboratory has seen synthetic opioids, like U-47700, more frequently.

ARKANSAS STATE CRIME LABORATORY

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Mission



To provide the highest quality scientific services to the criminal justice community and the State of Arkansas. This is accomplished through a team of skilled and dedicated employees utilized scientific equipment and appropriate validated methodologies. The laboratory strives to provide these services in a timeframe amenable to our customers.

Ensuring a safer Arkansas by providing the Criminal Justice System quality results within thirty days of submission.

Vision



Clear Communication: Communicate often, promptly, professionally and in person when appropriate

Quality: Excellence, getting it right the first time, consistent performance, continuous improvement, taking pride in one's work

Professional Development: Growing and engaging employees through training, mentoring, and providing leadership opportunities

Safety: Providing a safe work environment and educating employees on safety practices

Accountability: Holding oneself and others responsible for productive and ethical behavior.

Teamwork: Having a common vision, ensuring cohesiveness, assisting one another, supporting other sections, putting others interests first and making decisions based on what is best for the laboratory

Our Goals for 2017

- Embrace high expectations
- Encourage employee engagement
- Provide training and outreach to our customers
- Promote efficiency
- Pursue continuous improvements and a proactive mindset

ASCL Performance Survey

The Arkansas State Crime Laboratory Performance Survey is located on the Law Enforcement page (iResults) of the ASCL website. We welcome your feedback so that we can continue to improve and meet your needs.

Your Comments from the Survey

"The crew you have in Evidence Receiving are professional and helpful. Over all I think we have an outstanding State Crime Lab, and I'd put them up against any State Crime Lab."

"The staff and representatives are uniformly helpful and professional. The subpoena coordinators for the analysts are especially helpful and responsive in answering questions and dealing with issues that arise."

